

BEYOND THE QUEEN ANNE: ASTORIA ARCHITECTURE 1900-1925

2001 CCHS Historic Homes Tour
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Historic Homes



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BEYOND THE QUEEN ANNE: ASTORIA ARCHITECT 1900 - 1925

In reaction to the exterior ornamentation and interior formality of the Queen Anne design, a number of architectural styles emerged in the United States at the turn of the 20th century. In Astoria, the favored styles used in the construction of residences between 1900 and 1925 were the Craftsman and the Colonial Revival. The Craftsman style grew out of the Arts & Crafts Movement in England and is based on medieval building traditions. Oregonians favored the organic design of the style as the buildings blend well with the natural environment. Craftsman homes are known for their inviting interior layout and design. The Colonial Revival style had its roots in the classical traditions and in early American Colonial architecture.

JOHN E. WICKS (1879-1963)

One of Astoria's most prominent architects during the early 1900s was John E. Wicks. A native of Finland, John came to America in 1899 at the age of 19. Wicks attended Bethany College in Lindsborg, Kansas. There he completed a three-year architectural course in just one year. After receiving a scholarship to Stanford University, John headed out west to California. On his way, he stopped in Astoria to visit his younger brother Oliver.

Quite taken with Astoria, John decided to stay here and open up his own architectural firm on Commercial St. One of his most noted projects was the design of the new Astoria High School, which was built in 1909. Now called Towler Hall the building is part of the Clatsop Community College campus. Other projects included the reconstruction of Fort Astoria and the Young Building on 14th and Commercial, which was one of the few downtown buildings that survived the 1922 fire. After the fire, Wicks was commissioned to design the John Jacob Astor Hotel and the Captain Robert Gray School. He also worked on the planning and research for the reconstruction of Fort Clatsop.

Between 1905 and 1954, John Wicks designed over 300 residences, commercial buildings, schools and churches in Astoria and the surrounding area. His style is unique and often blends together the most popular architectural styles of the day. His design of both Craftsman and classically styled buildings show his grasp of both current architectural trends and historic building traditions. John collaborated with his daughter, Ebba Wicks Brown on a number of projects from 1937 to 1950. He died in 1963 on his 85th birthday.

CHAS. WIRKKALA HOUSE, 1921 938 KENSINGTON

Owners: Beth LaFleur & Matt Van Ess

This home was built in 1921 for Charles and Anna Wirkkala. Wirkkala was a banker and later editor of the *Columbia Press*, a Finnish-language weekly paper. John Wicks designed the Wirkkala house predominantly in the Craftsman style, though the building



does exhibit features of the Prairie style (wide, boxed eaves and low hipped roof) that was popularized by American architect Frank Lloyd Wright.

The Wirkkala house is amazingly intact. Architectural plans created by Wicks are in the Historical Society's archive and the new owners have a set on view in their home today. The kitchen dates to the time the house was built with the original wood cabinets and sink. The built in eating area and squared staircase are notable features. The garage is original to the house, though the doors have been replaced and exhibits an interesting concrete detail above the doors.

2

SMITH RESIDENCE, 1916
1309 JEROME

Owners: Scott Reuter & Ann Lederer

This Craftsman style house was built in 1916 for Charles and Ida Smith. Charles Smith was owner of the Bee Hive Department Store in downtown Astoria. It is thought that the house was designed by John Wicks. However, the *Astoria Daily Budget* reported that the plans for the



house were done up by the owner and the builder John Edwards, who reportedly built some of the best homes in Astoria during the teens and twenties. In 1925 the Smith's sold their house to city attorney, James Hope and his wife Helen. James Hope was involved in the incorporation of many local businesses: the Astoria Transit Co. (the ferry service), City Lumber Co. and the Clatsop Box Company.

The 1 and 1/2-story wood frame house was built on a concrete foundation with a detached stone garage. The most notable and perhaps unusual feature is the semi-arched hooded entrance portico. The belt course separates the first and second floors and also delineates the two types of exterior sheathing. Large horizontal windows with small lights above a single pane as seen here on the first floor were often used on Craftsman homes.

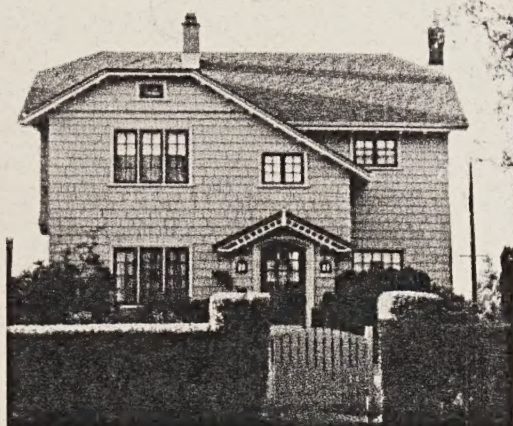
In restoring the interior of the house, the owners paid particular attention to complementing the original interior design. Scott and Anne added an additional bathroom on the second floor in the space which was originally a large closet. Their next project involves the restoration of the sun porch which may have originally been an open, side porch.

3

SALISBURY HOUSE, 1922-1923
1390 JEROME

Owner: Yvonne Starr

The Salisbury House was built for local banker Roy N. Salisbury, his wife Elva and their three children. The house was designed by John Wicks in the English cottage style. Roy Salisbury was a director of the U.S. National Bank of



Portland in 1937. He later became the bank's assistant manager and was elected president of the Lower Columbia Banker's Association in 1940.

The Jerome residence is an example of Wicks creativity of design. The house exhibits elements of both the English and French Revival styles. A pair of original entrance lights flanks the slightly curved front door. Above the door sits a low-pitched gable which seems out of place, as the predominant gable on the building is a clipped or jerkin head gable. The multi-paned casement windows add to the cottage-like charm of the home.

Upon entry into the house you are immediately in a small foyer. The foyer grew out of the large entry halls, which were an essential interior room in Victorian homes. Visitors to Queen Anne-style homes in the late 1880s would leave their calling card on the hall table or wait to be taken into one of the public rooms by a family member. After the turn-of-the-century, new technology such as the telephone, allowed Americans to become more relaxed with the social graces of the previous decades. The interior layout of homes built after 1900 is more inviting.

4 CARRUTHERS HOUSE, CA. 1906 1567 JEROME

Owners: John & Shirley Dahlsten

This Colonial Revival house was the home of Richard E. Carruthers, his wife Louise and their two sons Richard T. and Eben. Richard E. Carruthers was the first clerk at Fisher Bros. Co. and later the president of Astoria Hardware Co. After Richard passed away in the early 1930's, Louise continued to live in the house till 1948. Interesting, the house next door was built for Richard E.'s brother in 1910 while the small house behind was occupied ca. 1931 by Richard E's son and his wife.

The Colonial Revival features on the Carruthers house include the boxed eaves, the sidelights flanking the entrance door, the corner boards and frieze band, the columned entrance porch, and the multiple paned windows. The detached garage to the east of the house still retains its original garage doors. The entrance porch and rear porch have been altered as well as interior rooms.

The current owners incorporated many found (in their basement) architectural elements such as doors, windows, columns, and balusters. The squared main staircase was recently extended to the basement level. A spiral stair-

case was added between the second and attic floors. The kitchen was moved to a pantry area behind the dining room. Shirley has undertaken extensive work on the landscape both in front and behind their home.



5

PETERSEN HOUSE, 1917 1606 GRAND

Owners: Patrick & Lindi Overton

A John Wicks' designed residence; the Petersen House was constructed in 1917. This 1 1/2-story bungalow was one of five identical houses built on Grand Ave (three survive today). The house is primarily Craftsman in style with its three part window



on the facade and the square pillars which support the full width front porch. The paired twelve over one windows are commonly found on Colonial Revival homes. The half-timbering under the gables and the multiple-paned case-
ment windows are reminiscent of the Tudor style.

The owner, Loaf Petersen, who was a local banker in town, used the house as a rental for many years. Previous tenants included the vice president of Astoria National Bank, William Tyler and his wife in 1920, a civil engineer, Lewis Williams and his wife Elaine five years later, a logger Frank Wiggins and his wife Laura in 1927 and Dolph Cordz of Cordz Bros. Dry Goods in the 1930s.

The new owners have extensively rehabilitated the building for modern usage, in addition to restoring the original front porch. On the interior, the house was taken down to its studs do to the large amount of damage incurred over the years. The basic floor plan is similar to the original on the first floor. Upstairs, the configuration was changed to allow two full bathrooms and three bedrooms. The finished basement contains a laundry room, family room, and a third bathroom (!).

Olaf

due

6 NOONAN-NORBLAD HOUSE, 1905 1625 GRAND

Owners: Bob & Julie Brown

Built for E.P. Noonan, an Astoria insurance man, in 1905 on Grand Avenue. Grand Avenue was one of the widest residential streets in Astoria and many high-style homes were built on Grand. Noonan bought alot of property in Astoria and built many houses around the turn-of-the-century. In 1918, Noonan sold his home to Albin W. Norblad, Astoria attorney and state senator. In 1919, as senator, Norblad introduced legislation creating the Oregon Coast Highway. Norblad became Governor of Oregon in 1929.

The Noonan-Norblad house is an excellent example of the Dutch Colonial style. The distinctive Dutch gambrel roof distinguishes the house as a Dutch Colonial. The gambrel roof form (two pitches with the lower pitch having a slight flare) was brought to America by the Dutch who settled in New York in the 1600s. The roof is a common type used for barns especially in the East. Other colonial elements include the oriel (circular) windows, columns used as porch supports and the frieze band above the capitals. The entrance porch was enclosed at a later date.

On the interior, simple classical trim can be seen around the doors and windows. The staircase from the second floor to the attic is a noteworthy feature.

